

Claims

We claim:

- 1        1. A physiologically-acceptable agent, adapted to deliver a nucleic acid to a cell,  
2        comprising inorganic particles to which are bound a cell-binding component and the  
3        nucleic acid.
- 1        2. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles are of a biodegradable  
2        metal oxide or a salt.
- 1        3. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles have a polymeric  
2        coating.
- 1        4. The agent according to claim 2, wherein the particles have a polymeric  
2        coating. *B*
- 1        5. The agent according to claim 3, wherein the coating is biodegradable.
- 1        6. The agent according to claim 4, wherein the coating is biodegradable.
- 1        7. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles are from about 5 nm to  
2        about 100 nm in size.
- 1        8. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles are magnetisable.
- 1        9. The agent according to claim 1, which additionally comprises a nuclease  
2        inhibitor.
- 1        10. The agent according to claim 9, wherein the inhibitor is Group 3 ion.
- 1        11. The agent according to claim 1, which additionally comprises a nucleic acid-  
2        binding protein and the nucleic acid comprises a segment having affinity for that protein.

1        12. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is bound via a  
2 complementary sequence linked to the particles.

1        13. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles are homogeneous  
2 and/or substantially free of water-soluble material.

1        14. The agent according to claim 1, for use in therapy.

1        15. An injectable composition comprising an agent according to claim 1 and a  
2 physiologically-acceptable diluent.

1        16. A physiologically-acceptable vector comprising the coated particles and  
2 bound cell-binding component, but not the nucleic acid, as defined in claim 1.

1        17. A method for the treatment of a patient using gene therapy, said method  
2 comprising administering an effective amount of an agent of claim 1 to the patient.

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